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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1394th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 14 August 1991, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA (Cuba)
(Vice-Chairman)

- Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) (continued)
- Special Committee decision of 15 August 1990 concerning Puerto Rico (continued)
- Organization of work

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Alarcon de Quesada (Cuba), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

QUESTION OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS (MALVINAS) (A/AC.109/1084; A/AC.109/L.1767) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee has before it a draft resolution on this item (A/AC.109/L.1767), to which attention was drawn at the 1387th meeting, on 9 August 1991. I call on the Permanent Representative of Venezuela to introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. ARRIA (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): In introducing this draft resolution, I think it appropriate to recall the ties of friendship and cooperation that have united Venezuela and the United Kingdom since our independence and that have proved useful in overcoming various situations. I do not seek to downplay the meaning of that fact, let alone to conceal it, but I can affirm in all sincerity that difficult moments are not mainly what come to mind when Venezuelans think of their relations with the United Kingdom. Rather, we think of the valuable role played by the United Kingdom in our independence struggles, about which the Liberator, Simón Bolivar, left us numerous testimonies of gratitude.

I think it is appropriate to refer to this background in order to vouch for the sincerity of my country's position on a question which essentially involves the solidarity of the peoples of Latin America, where developments affecting one country are of concern to all.

The resolution of the Organization of American States of July 1991, unanimously adopted by the States members of that Organization - Caribbean, Latin American and North American - requests that negotiations be speedily

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

entered into in order to achieve a peaceful solution to this sovereignty dispute and clearly demonstrates a continental concern that should be met with a constructive response.

The new world context obliges States to resolve international disputes in the spirit of dialogue and cooperation, as reflected in the draft resolution now before the Committee - indeed the same spirit that guides the United Nations and particularly the Security Council.

The draft resolution Venezuela is introducing in the Special Committee is also sponsored by Cuba and Chile. It follows the same guidelines of the resolution adopted last year by a wide margin. The responsibility the sponsors are assuming is part of the unswerving Latin American commitment on questions of decolonization, particularly with regard to the definitive solution of the case of the Malvinas Islands.

The fourth and fifth preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution we are submitting for consideration express our concern that this prolonged dispute has not yet been settled, and also the interest of the international community in the resumption by the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland of negotiations on the question of the Malvinas Islands.

Consistent with these fundamental concerns, the operative part reiterates that the way to put an end to the special and particular colonial situation of the Malvinas Islands is the peaceful and negotiated settlement of the dispute over sovereignty between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom. It also notes with satisfaction that the Government of Argentina, with a keen sense of international responsibility, has reiterated, through its Minister for Foreign Affairs at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, its

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

will to comply fully with the General Assembly resolution referring to the question of the Malvinas Islands.

Moreover, it reiterates the support for the mission of good offices of the Secretary-General in complying with the request made by the General Assembly in its resolutions on this item.

The draft resolution we are presenting is, in our view, in keeping with the best interests of the parties, as it promotes effective dialogue for achieving a negotiated solution that would put an end to this prolonged dispute. The sponsoring countries have reflected this spirit in the draft resolution which, we hope, will be supported by all the members of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I now call on the representative of Argentina.

Mr. CHIARADIA (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): Allow me to begin, Sir, by saying how pleased we are to see you presiding over the discussions of this Committee. There are few countries that have credentials as good as your own country's when it comes to a commitment to the process of decolonization. We who know you well and are familiar with your diplomatic skill and wisdom are confident of the successful outcome of the Committee's work. I should also like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee and to extend greetings and thanks to the Secretariat officials and staff.

In addition, we should like to pay a tribute to the Special Committee for its vital contribution to the process of decolonization since 1961 and for its determination and repeated efforts in the application of the purposes and principles of the United Nations. To this end, we once again reaffirm our delegation's support for and encouragement of the Committee's work.

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

My delegation should also like to thank you, Sir, and the other members of the Committee for allowing us to take part in this discussion. The question of the Malvinas Islands has a direct bearing on vital, permanent interests of my country. Consequently, the Committee's discussions and decisions are of great importance to Argentines.

While the Committee is well aware of the details and background of the question of the Malvinas Islands - the item having been continuously inscribed on its agenda since 1964 - I should none the less like to give a brief summary of the historical framework of the question.

The Malvinas Islands were sighted for the first time in 1520 by Esteban Gomez, a Spanish navigator on Magellan's expedition, 72 years before it was sighted by a British navigator, John Davis. Its first settlers, who were Frenchmen from St. Malo, settled in east Malvina in 1764. Spain lodged a formal protest with the Government of France over this settlement, securing recognition of its rights of dominion and the consequent withdrawal of the settlers. Similarly, in 1766, when England for the first time, and clandestinely, occupied an islet of the archipelago, that occupation was challenged by Spain, and, as a result, was abandoned in 1774.

From 1766 to 1810 - the year in which Argentina broke its ties with Madrid - the islands were actually in the possession of Spain, and were uninterruptedly administered by 30 Spanish Governors reporting to the resident authority in Buenos Aires. Argentina, which became independent in 1816, inherited territorial jurisdiction over the former Spanish viceroyship of Río de la Plata, which included the Malvinas Islands. It should be recalled that the newly independent States of Latin America established the boundaries of their territories on the basis of the former colonial administrative

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

divisions and pronounced themselves to be the sole, exclusive heirs to all titles and sovereign rights of the former colonial Power in those territories. The international community at the time recognized this delimitation, including England, which in 1823, when recognizing Argentine independence, did not formulate any reservation at all regarding its alleged right to the Malvinas Islands or other adjacent Territories.

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

Once the process of Argentine independence was consolidated - a lengthy, painful and arduous process - and as soon as it became possible, the Government of Argentina carried out acts of possession, occupation and administration inherent in its rights of sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands. Thus, in 1820 it formally took possession of the islands. In 1823 it appointed a Governor, while granting land and fishing and breeding concessions, none of which was challenged by Great Britain. Neither did it challenge that status in 1823, as we have said, when it recognized our independence, and again in 1825, when a treaty of friendship, trade and navigation was concluded between the two countries.

In other words, for more than half a century England did not formulate any reservation or lodge any protest over the Spanish, and later, the Argentine, occupation of the islands. However, the fact of not having made a claim in this respect - which can be explained by the lack of legal title - did not diminish its interest in the archipelago. The events of 1833 were part of England's expansionist ambitions in the South Atlantic, promoted by the British admiralty, which wanted to have a naval station on the strategic route around Cape Horn to Australia and the South Pacific. In this connection, English troops landed and attacked, for purposes of conquest, the city of Buenos Aires in 1806 and 1807. They were repelled on both occasions by the inhabitants of Buenos Aires. English troops occupied the Cape of Good Hope in 1806, Saint Helena in 1815 and Tristan da Cunha in 1816.

These developments reflected England's colonial, expansionist policy at that time, which aimed to annex strategic points for communication and trade - as occurred in Singapore in 1819 and Malacca in 1824. It was this policy and the lack of any right underlying any possible claim it might have that led

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

it to send British armed forces on 3 January 1833 to invade and occupy the Malvinas Islands, expelling the Argentine authorities and settlers there.

The Argentine reaction was swift. On 15 January 1833, the Argentine Government lodged a formal claim with the English chargé d'affaires in Buenos Aires, reiterating it shortly thereafter through its representative in London. From that time until now, the Argentine Republic has continued to protest at the act of force and illegal occupation of the Malvinas Islands and to reaffirm its rights over them.

This historical background means that the question of the Malvinas Islands is a special colonial case of a distinct nature, quite unlike the situation of other Non-Self-Governing Territories. Numerous decisions of this Committee and of the General Assembly reflect this fact. Among them, resolution 2065 (XX), adopted by a large majority of the General Assembly, provides that the question of the Malvinas Islands comprises the dispute between the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom concerning sovereignty over the islands, and that it should be resolved through negotiations taking into account the provisions and objectives of the Charter and of resolution 1514 (XV) and the interests of the population of the Islands.

This makes the following quite clear, as regards the Malvinas Islands; first, that there is a sovereignty dispute over the Territory; secondly, that there are only two parties to that dispute - the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom; and, thirdly, that the solution to the dispute must be arrived at through negotiations between both Governments as the only way of putting an end to the colonial situation, excluding in this case the applicability of the right to self-determination.

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

Such non-applicability - on which the General Assembly stated its views in 1985 when it rejected a British amendment that would have included the principle of the right to self-determination in the draft resolution on the question of the Malvinas - is perfectly clear, because that principle is valid for peoples subjugated by a colonial Power, but not in the case of individuals transported to a country by that same colonial Power after that Power had usurped part of the territory of an independent State. In this regard, members should note that, owing to controls that have existed since 1833 over entry into and settlement in the Islands, Argentines were prevented from settling freely or owning land in the Malvinas Islands. The colonial Power thus set up in the Islands a population whose characteristics were predetermined, whose individuals were British subjects entitled to establish themselves in the United Kingdom. To grant those British subjects the right to self-determination would mean agreeing that they should be allowed to act as arbiters over a territorial dispute to which their country is a party. There is no doubt that this is not at all the interpretation given by the United Nations of the right to self-determination.

However, the fact that their competence in this sphere is not recognized does not mean that their interests should be overlooked - far from it. The parties to the dispute know full well the concern of the Government and of the people of Argentina over the need to ensure that they should enjoy all the necessary safeguards with regard to respect for such interests - not to mention, of course, the benefits and advantages that would naturally arise from the possibility of contact with the continental mainland, which would take the form of various options, inter alia, in culture, education, trade,

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sport and tourism, thereby improving the well-being of this population, which is in such a peculiar situation.

The United Nations quite rightly views the question of the Malvinas Islands in operative paragraph 6 of resolution 1514 (XV) as follows:

> "Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

At this point, I wish to reiterate the firm determination of my country to recover the exercise of its sovereign rights over the Malvinas Islands, the South Georgia Islands and the South Sandwich Islands and the adjacent maritime areas, and its commitment to achieving this objective through dialogue and negotiation with the United Kingdom, with the firm backing of the international community.

The restoration of diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which was formalized in February 1990, has made it possible for both countries to reach an understanding and common ground on matters of mutual interest. In this process of normalization of bilateral relations, agreements have been reached on political, economic, cultural and scientific matters, all of which is the result of President Menem's decision to agree to a temporary formula safeguarding our sovereign rights, while at the same time permitting closer relations that promote the necessary atmosphere for substantive negotiations.

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

Many steps have been taken in this direction since the last session of the Committee. I shall just refer to the following. The Argentine-British Working Group on South Atlantic Questions, established under the joint Argentine-British statement in Madrid on 15 February 1990, devoted its first two meetings held in Rio de Janeiro and Madrid in September and November of that year, to fisheries questions. Its mandate involved the bilateral exploration of the possibilities for cooperation and conservation with regard to the most significant deep-sea fishing grounds of the south-west Atlantic south of the 45th parallel, including those of the waters adjacent to the Malvinas Islands.

As a result of those meetings, in November last year both Governments issued a joint statement on the conservation of fishing resources. By means of that statement, and in order to contribute to the conservation of fishing resources, it was agreed that a South Atlantic Fisheries Commission should be established and the decision was taken on the temporary total prohibition of commercial fishing in a specified maritime area.

Included as part of the functions of the Commission - which in keeping with its mandate is to meet at least twice a year - is the submission to both Governments of recommendations elaborated on the basis of information provided by them for the conservation of the most significant deeo-sea species and also of proposals for joint scientific research and monitoring the application of the previously mentioned prohibition.

The Commission's first meeting was held in Buenos Aires in May. Agreement was reached on a series of recommendations which were submitted to the two Governments with regard to the collection of information on fisheries

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

and the holding of joint scientific meetings. The next meeting of the Commission will be held in London in November.

This year, the Argentine-British Working Group on South Atlantic Questions met in Montevideo, Uruguay, and London in May and June, respectively, to consider questions relating to the exchange of information system and reciprocal consultations on the movement of units of the armed forces of both countries in the South Atlantic, as well as on questions of safety of maritime navigation and aviation in the area of the Malvinas Islands, including procedures for search and rescue in cases of emergency. The result was the elaboration of a set of proposals which are now being considered by both Governments.

This brief outline gives an idea of the possibilities for common ground that open up when there is a will for cooperation and understanding. The progress achieved in various fields show that there is no subject which cannot be tackled and resolved through frank negotiations. This derives not only from our bilateral experience in this case but from the world situation, which shows how true this is with each passing day.

Long-standing regional conflicts much more complex than the question of the Malvinas Islands - such as those of the Middle East, Cyprus and Cambodia - are now being dealt with through negotiations. When the parties to those conflicts come together in their quest for solutions, prompted as they are by the new international climate, they tell us that there are no taboo subjects and that all questions can be tackled and discussed when there is a true willingness to achieve peace.

However, notwithstanding the resumption of Argentine-British relations and the gradual restoration of the substantial links which traditionally existed between our countries at various levels, very much to the regret of my

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

country it has not been possible to make a start on the negotiations on the sovereignty dispute requested by the majority of the international community. Just as the colonial system is out of place in the political structures of our day, unwillingness to come to the negotiating table and discuss a specific issue runs counter to the new trends towards international détente, especially when these trends are supported by a permanent member of the Security Council.

We are convinced that such reasons, as well as the new conditions now existing at the international level, including the disappearance of strategic considerations having to do with the East-West conflict, should lead to the resumption of negotiations for a just, peaceful and lasting solution of the sovereignty dispute, in which the interests of the inhabitants of the Islands are duly taken into account, thus putting an end to the anachronistic colonial situation which undermines my country's territorial integrity. That is also how the matter is seen by the Organization of American States which, meeting in June in Santiago de Chile, adopted a resolution, with the consensus of all its members - not just the Latin American members, but also those of North America and the Caribbean - reiterating its request to the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations in order to find a peaceful solution to the sovereignty dispute as soon as possible.

Of course, it should be clear that until this goal is achieved, it is essential for the parties to the dispute to refrain from taking any unilateral measures in all fields, particularly with regard to natural resources, so as to avoid undermining prospects for a just and lasting solution to the sovereignty dispute.

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

Once again, the Latin American members of the Committee have submitted a draft resolution on this question. The representative of Venezuela has explained in detail the substance of the draft and the constructive thinking which motivated it. In addition to our fraternal gratitude for this unswerving support, I wish to emphasize that the co-sponsorship of Cuba, Chile and Venezuela once again underlines the regional dimension of the problem and the firm support of Latin America for Argentine rights and the common interests of our continent in the resumption of substantive negotiations between Buenos Aires and London.

By supporting the draft resolution, the Special Committee will be making a significant contribution to the peaceful negotiated solution of the bilateral dispute over sovereignty of the Malvinas Islands and related problems. It is in this spirit that my delegation will be deeply grateful for the support of the members of the Committee for draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1767.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of Argentina for his kind words addressed to me and to my country.

As there are no further speakers on this item, the Committee will proceed to take action on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1767.

Since no member wishes to speak in explanation of vote before the vot , I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

Draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1767 was adopted by 21 votes to none, with 3 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their vote after the vote.

Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea): My delegation supported draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1767 because we firmly stand by the United Nations Charter as it relates to decolonization, as well as by General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) on decolonization. We welcome the dialogue between the parties involved, particularly the Governments of Great Britain and Argentina, and we would like to encourage that dialogue so that it may reach a fruitful conclusion. It is entirely up to those parties to determine what matters are to be resolved in the dialogue. The Committee should assist in whatever way possible in order that this matter may finally be peacefully resolved.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee has thus concluded its consideration of this item.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE DECISION OF 15 AUGUST 1990 CONCERNING PUERTO RICO (A/AC.109/L.1768 and L.1769/Rev.1) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee has before it draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1769/Rev.1, introduced on 12 August by the representative of Venezuela. I have been asked to postpone consideration of this draft resolution until our next meeting, which will be held tomorrow morning. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee agrees to postpone consideration of this item until our next meeting.

It was so decided.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): As stated this morning, it is expected that we shall complete our work tomorrow, Thursday, 15 August. However, there are still some decisions and two draft resolutions on which the Committee must take action. In this connection, I wish to appeal to members to become actively involved in the open-ended Drafting Group, and I hope that the consultations will be intensified so that the conclusions of the Group can be put before the Committee as soon as possible, thus making it possible for the Committee to conclude its work. In addition, may I remind members that we may have to waive the 24-hour rule if the Committee is to conclude its work tomorrow, since, as we know, the texts have not yet been finalized. I hope that I can have the cooperation of members should it prove necessary to follow that course.

Mr. LEHNE (Norway): The Chairman mentioned that there are still two outstanding draft resolutions. I have not seen any draft resolutions and I wonder whether the Chairman could clarify the two draft resolutions to which he has referred.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The draft resolutions are still being drafted and have not yet been completed. That is why neither of us has seen them. We are referring to the discussions that we have been carrying out on three items in respect of which it is expected that draft resolutions will be submitted on which the Committee will take the appropriate decisions. I refer to those draft resolutions that are still being drawn up.

Before adjourning this meeting, may I also remind members that there will be a meeting of this Committee's Working Group tomorrow morning following our formal meeting. As members know, that Working Group comprises the members of the Expanded Bureau and the representatives of the Congo, Fiji and the Islamic Republic of Iran. An aide-mémoire relating to pending items o be discussed by the Working Group was circulated to its members this morning and their comments are expected for tomorrow morning.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1395th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 15 August 1991, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA (Cuba)
(Vice-Chairman)

- Question of Western Sahara (continued)

- Special Committee decision of 15 August 1990 concerning Puerto Rico

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Alarcon de Quesada (Cuba), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

QUESTION OF WESTERN SAHARA (A/AC.109/1082) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): Does any member wish to speak on this item at this stage? Since that does not appear to be the case, may I take it that, subject to any directives which the General Assembly might give in that connection at its forthcoming session, and in order to facilitate the Fourth Committee's consideration of the question, the Committee decides to trasmit to the Assembly all the relevant documentation?

It was so decided.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE DECISION OF 15 AUGUST 1990 CONCERNING PUERTO RICO (A/AC.109/L.1768; L.1769/Rev.1) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): In connection with this item, the Committee has before it draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1769/Rev.1.

Mr. ARRIA (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to draw members' attention to the Spanish and English versions of the draft resolution, and to note two linguistic changes for the consideration of the Committee. First, as the phrase "thereby reaffirming the Latin American identity of Puerto Rico", at the end of the seventh preambular paragraph, was rather superfluous, Venezuela believed that it should be removed. Second, in operative paragraph 2 of the Spanish version, Venezuela would like to replace the phrase "Exhorta al Congreso" with the phrase "Confía que el Congreso". The English version should read "Trusts that" instead of "Urges". The rest would remain unchanged. While these revisions would not change the spirit or the content of the draft resolution in any way, they would align the two texts.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I am sure that all members have taken note of these revisions to the text of the draft resolution. If no member wishes to comment at this stage, the Committee will proceed to take a decision on the draft resolution contained in document A/AC.109/L.1769/Rev.1, as just orally revised by the Permanent Representative of Venezuela.

I shall first call on those representatives who wish to explain their vote before the voting.

Mr. LEHNE (Norway): It has been my Government's consistent position that it is inappropriate for this body to consider the question of Puerto Rico. Our position is based on the fact that the General Assembly itself, in resolution 748 (VIII), determined that the people of Puerto Rico had effectively exercised the right to self-determination. In its decision, the General Assembly removed Puerto Rico from the category of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The draft resolution before us deals with Puerto Rico as a Non-Self-Governing Territory, and that is in contradiction with General

(Mr. Lehne, Norway)

Assembly decisions. I should also like to recall that the General Assembly previously rejected a proposal by Cuba to include the question of Puerto Rico on its agenda. My delegation will therefore vote against the draft resolution.

Mr. SLABY (Czechoslovakia): The draft resolution contained in document A/AC.109/L.1769/Rev.1, as orally revised, deals with Puerto Rico as a Non-Self-Governing Territory. The position of Czechoslovakia on the question of Puerto Rico stems from the fact that the General Assembly, in its resolution 748 (VIII), determined that the people of Puerto Rico had effectively exercised the right to self-determination and that, consequently, the General Assembly itself removed Puerto Rico from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. That is why we believe it is inappropriate for the Special Committee to consider the question of Puerto Rico. Moreover, my delegation has reservations concerning the wording of some provisions. It will therefore abstain in the vote on the draft resolution.

Mr. EAFEARE (Papua New Guinea): I have asked to speak on behalf of Papua New Guinea to explain that we shall not be participating in the vote, because we feel that it would do injustice to the work that has been done on the draft resolution. Also, we are aware of the fact that procedures exist between the United States and Puerto Rico. We would like to study the situation regarding Puerto Rico more closely because of legal and constitutional sensitivity relating to the issue of Puerto Rico. We have therefore decided not to participate at this time in the decision on the draft resolution.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): As no other delegation wishes to explain its vote before the voting, the Committee will now take a decision on the draft resolution, as orally revised.

A roll-call vote has been requested. In this connection, I wish to draw members' attention to the relevant rule of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, as follows:

"The roll-call shall be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the members, beginning with the member whose name is drawn by lot by the President. The name of each member shall be called in any roll-call, and one of its representatives shall reply 'yes', 'no' or 'abstention'. The result of the voting shall be inserted in the record in the English alphabetical order of the names of the members."

A roll-call vote was taken.

Afghanistan, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Chile, Cuba, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela

Against: Norway

Abstaining: Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Côte d'Ivoire, Czechoslovakia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Mali, Tunisia, Yugoslavia

Draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1769/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted by 9 votes to 1, with 10 abstentions.*

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I call on the representative of Chile in explanation of vote after the voting.

Mr. FIOL (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Chile voted in favour of draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1769/Rev.1, as orally revised, on Puerto Rico submitted by the delegation of Venezuela for the Special Committee's consideration and we wish to explain our vote.

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* During the course of the roll-call vote, the following members announced that they were not participating: China, Congo, Ethiopia, Papua New Guinea.

(Mr. Fiol, Chile)

The delegation of Chile wishes to draw particular attention to the fourth preambular paragraph, which states:

"the agreement of the Puerto Rican political leadership to request the President of the United States of America and the United States Congress to adopt legislation with a view to consulting the people of Puerto Rico so that they may express themselves freely, voluntarily, democratically and without interference on their political future".

This political consensus on the part of the Puerto Rican people is the principal reason for the United Nations to take an interest in the matter.

At the same time the delegation of Chile wishes to reaffirm that the reference made in the draft resolution to General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and its applicability to the case of Puerto Rico does not constitute a valid legal argument with regard to the situation. To recognize that argument would be to disregard resolution 748 (VIII), adopted in 1953, in which, among other things, the General Assembly recognized that, when choosing their constitutional and international status, the people of Puerto Rico had effectively exercised their right to self-determination.

Lastly, the delegation of Chile takes the view that substantive decisions to be taken concerning the constitutional question of Puerto Rico are within the exclusive competence of the United States Congress.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): As no other representative wishes to explain his delegation's vote, I shall now do so in my capacity as the representative of Cuba.

The delegation of Cuba voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of Venezuela, acting consistently with the position we have always maintained in favour of the exercise by the people of Puerto Rico of

(The Chairman)

its inalienable right to self-determination and independence. This is a position we have maintained and will continue to maintain unswervingly. In our view, it reflects what clearly establishes international legality and, in particular, the Declaration contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV); it also reflects the fundamental aspiration of the Puerto Rican nation as a whole, which has expressed itself very clearly, allowing for diverse points of view, to the effect that this is a colonial situation which the vast majority of the Puerto Rican people wishes to end.

I believe that the testimony heard by the Committee from a wide range of petitioners representing diverse political positions in the Territory has made clear that there is a broad national consensus favouring a change in the current situation and finally enabling the Puerto Rican people to exercise a right to which it is entitled as much as any other people under foreign domination. Moreover, as confirmed in the resolution we have just adopted, the fact that the United States Administration, through its President, has itself called on Congress to adopt legislation that would permit the people of Puerto Rico to exercise its right to self-determination, implies recognition of that right's not having been exercised and reverses the long-standing United States position to end consideration of this case by this Committee.

(The Chairman)

We reaffirm our support for the just struggle of the Puerto Rican people for its independence and confirm our total support for the resolution we have adopted. As a Caribbean and Latin American country, Cuba expresses its gratitude to the Government and the delegation of Venezuela for the important initiative they took this year by enabling the Committee to adopt a resolution that not only reflected the majority view of the Puerto Rican people but also enabled those of us on the Committee from Latin American and Caribbean countries to come together for the first time and endorse a text reflecting an aspiration shared by all Latin America and the Caribbean - to bring closer the day when the Puerto Rican people and nation may be reintegrated into the great common homeland that is theirs and ours: our America.

I now resume my capacity as Chairman and, there being no further speakers, I declare that the Committee has thus concluded its consideration of this item.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1396th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 15 August 1991, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. SLABY (Czechoslovakia)
(Vice-Chairman)

- Organization of work

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Slaby (Czechoslovakia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: As members are aware, the Committee has concluded consideration of almost all the items on its agenda. The only questions pending are the adoption of the draft resolutions relating to three of the items the Committee has considered this year, as well as the 98th report of the Working Group.

I have been informed that very limited progress has been made in the preparation of those draft resolutions. I hope members will take the opportunity to concentrate their efforts on those draft resolutions during the informal consultations that will follow this meeting so that we can conclude this session as soon as possible. I appeal to all delegations, and I trust that the spirit of compromise and cooperation that has always prevailed in our work will once again guide our approach in dealing with those delicate issues. I invite all delegations to stay in this room for those consultations.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): In view of the fact that the Committee has already virtually concluded its work, and that little time remains until we leave this forum, I should appreciate a clarification concerning the documentation for the Committee's work. In particular, I have not thus far seen a single record of the Committee's meetings - not even the first meeting. I should like to know how things stand in that regard, particularly as there is but little time left prior to the next General Assembly session. In our view, the meetings that have taken place during this session were very important. Delegations have

(Mr. Berezovsky, USSR)

made statements that are not only of interest but also essential for preparing for the upcoming General Assembly session. Hence I should like the Committee's documentation to be available to members, at least in a reasonably short time from now, particularly in view of the usual statutory time limits in the work of United Nations organs.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall transmit the comments of the representative of the Soviet Union to the Secretariat, and through the Secretariat, to the responsible Division.

Mr. SHAHEED (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): With regard to the statement made by the representative of the Soviet Union, I think that the delay in documentation is a problem members have suffered from over the past few years, particularly documentation in Arabic. I believe there are a number of records that have yet to be issued in Arabic. At any rate, documentation should be issued in a timely fashion, making it possible for us to submit timely reports and to transmit them to the individuals concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: The comments just made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic will also be transmitted to the Secretariat.

The next meeting of the Commission will be announced in the Journal.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1397th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 23 August 1991, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA (Cuba)
(Vice-Chairman)

- 98th Report of the Working Group
- Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international organizations associated with the United Nations (continued)
- Military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration which might be impeding the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (continued)

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- Activities of foreign economic and other interests which are impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Territories under colonial domination and efforts to eliminate colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination in southern Africa (continued)

- Organization of work

- Closing of the Special Committee meetings in 1991

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Alarcon de Quesada (Cuba), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

98th REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP (A/AC.109/L.1770)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I invite members to consider document A/AC.109/L.1770, containing the 98th report of the Working Group. If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Committee is prepared to adopt the report of the Working Group.

It was so decided.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (A/AC.109/L.1771) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to draw members' attention to the draft resolution contained in document A/AC.109/L.1771.

I call on the representative of Czechoslovakia for an explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. SLABY (Czechoslovakia): Everyone in this Committee knows that more than a small number of United Nations Member States have reservations about the Committee's work, or are not very enthusiastic about affixing their signatures to materials the Committee produces. The opinion or, rather, the conviction of my delegation is that the prepared texts of the draft resolutions on activities of foreign economic and other interests, on military activities and arrangements in Territories and on the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies are no better than last year's texts. Of course, some progress has been made, although it is limited, to the extent that, when compared with developments, it is not progress but actually regress.

(Mr. Slaby, Czechoslovakia)

In the light of this situation, we cannot but recall what my delegation stated last April in this forum:

"Where is it stipulated that the Special Committee of 24 has the right to draft all, or almost all, of the General Assembly's decolonization resolutions?" (1378th meeting, p. 12)

Such a practice of the Committee of 24 should be changed. The Committee should adopt its own report, including the Committee's resolutions contained in it; and the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly should consider that report, possibly modify the recommendations of the Committee of 24, and subsequently adopt them, unlike the present stereotyped and untenable practice, in fact, of merely taking note of them.

These texts, which are being submitted to the plenary session as a result of extended consultations, bear out our opinions of last spring. They should not be submitted by the Committee to the General Assembly. They are outdated, obsolete and wordy, and do not reflect developments in the areas concerned and in the world. The draft resolutions are controversial, and include unacceptable name-calling. Many of their provisions have no direct linkage with the items under consideration and deal with the question of apartheid, which is not - if members attentively look through document A/AC.109/L.1755 - on the agenda of the Special Committee. Lastly, these draft resolutions pose a serious obstacle to the possibility of reaching consensus in the General Assembly. Guided by these arguments, my delegation will abstain in the votes on these draft resolutions. Nevertheless, we reserve our right to express our position on some particular paragraphs of all the texts.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1771. Separate votes have been requested on the sixteenth preambular paragraph and on operative paragraph 20.

We shall vote first on the sixteenth preambular paragraph.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

The sixteenth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1771 was retained by 17 votes to 3, with 2 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will now vote on operative paragraph 20 of draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1771.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

Paragraph 20 of draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1771 was retained by 16 votes to 3, with 2 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will now take a decision on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1771, as a whole.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

Draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1771, as a whole, was adopted by 20 votes to none, with 4 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I shall now call on those members wishing to speak in explanation of vote after the voting.

Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea): My delegation participated fully in the consultations on the drafting of this draft resolution and on others. Our main difficulty is that we have to remember that when we point a finger at somebody there are four fingers pointing at ourselves, so we are very cautious about name-calling. Sometimes name-calling can be positive, when we praise, but sometimes name-calling involves criticism. In this particular context, if

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

name-calling is to be allowed, then we should at least list all the names - which would be very difficult. I hope that in the future we can move away from this practice.

Secondly, there was some confusion during the voting process. Papua New Guinea had intended to abstain in the votes on the sixteenth preambular paragraph and on operative paragraph 20. We voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole.

I should also like to put it to the members of the Committee that the Territories concerned, particularly Non-Self-Governing Territory and colonial Territories in the Pacific and the Caribbean, and their needs and aspirations should be fully taken into account if these draft resolutions are to be more realistic with respect to the work of the Committee. I appeal to members to remember this when we come to deal with these issues again in future sessions.

Mr. LEHNE (Norway): I asked to speak in order to comment on the draft resolution just adopted on the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies. Norway abstained in the voting on that draft resolution as a whole and voted against the sixteenth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 20.

(Mr. Lehne, Norway)

Norway has for many years actively supported the efforts of the specialized agencies to provide assistance, within their particular competence, to those struggling for freedom and self-determination. Correspondingly, Norway has provided increased humanitarian, technical and education assistance to peoples that have not yet exercised their right to self-determination and their right freely to determine their own political future.

In their revised programme of action against apartheid, the Nordic countries have committed themselves to increasing their humanitarian assistance to refugees and liberation movements, as well as to victims and opponents of apartheid, and to the front-line States, both directly and through the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies. This Nordic programme also establishes that the granting of loans, including participation in international loans, to South Africa should be prohibited or discouraged. As far as loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to South Africa are concerned, such loans should be discouraged with due regard to the articles of agreement of the IMF as long as the apartheid system and its negative effects on the South African economy remain.

Although Norway accordingly supports the main thrust of the draft resolution we have just voted on, we regret that it still contains some elements which cause problems of principle. My delegation deeply regrets that a resolution regarding assistance to peoples that are struggling for self-determination is sabotaged by issues extraneous to the subject-matter. This Committee seems to disregard the positive developments that have taken place in South Africa over the past year and ignores policy declarations of the South African Government with regard to the Treaty on the

(Mr. Lehne, Norway)

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This fact undermines the credibility of the Committee and, regrettably, the interests of the peoples that are struggling for self-determination. Norway deplores the singling out of individual countries or groups of countries as allegedly being responsible for the policies pursued by the South African Government, and we oppose the inclusion of paragraphs irrelevant to the substance of the matter.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee has thus concluded consideration of the item.

MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS BY COLONIAL POWERS IN TERRITORIES UNDER THEIR ADMINISTRATION WHICH MIGHT BE IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (A/AC.109/L.1772) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to draw members' attention to draft decision A/AC.109/L.1772 on this item. First I call on the Acting Secretary of the Committee on a point of clarification.

Mr. DRISS (Acting Secretary of the Committee): There are, unfortunately, errors in the English version only of the draft decision. Owing to time constraints, we had to rush the text through editing. In paragraphs 5 and 8, there are square brackets that should have been removed from the text.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will now take action on draft decision A/AC.109/L.1772.

A separate vote has been requested on paragraph 7. Therefore, the Committee will vote first on that paragraph.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

Paragraph 7 was retained by 17 votes to 3, with 3 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will now vote on the draft decision, as a whole.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

Draft decision A/AC.109/L.1772, as a whole, was adopted by 20 votes to none, with 4 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I call on the representative of Norway, in explanation of vote.

Mr. LEHNE (Norway): My delegation abstained in the vote on draft decision A/AC.109/L.1772, as a whole; and voted against its paragraph 7.

My delegation still considers the request for withdrawal of military installations contained in this draft decision to be too categorical. We also deplore the continued practice of selectively singling out individual countries as supporters of the political policies pursued by the South African Government, particularly in view of the changes that have taken place in South Africa and the decision of the Government of South Africa to become party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

For those reasons, Norway was not able to join in the consensus.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee has thus concluded consideration of the item.

ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERESTS WHICH ARE IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES IN TERRITORIES UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION AND EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE COLONIALISM, APARTHEID AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (A/AC.109/L.1773) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to draw members' attention to draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1773 on this item.

(The Chairman)

Since no delegation wishes to make a statement in explanation of vote before the voting, the Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1773.

Separate votes have been requested on the seventh preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 5.

We shall first vote on the seventh preambular paragraph.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

The seventh preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1773 was retained by 19 votes to 3, with 1 abstention.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will now vote on paragraph 5.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

Paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1773 was retained by 16 votes to 3, with 3 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will now take a decision on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1773, as a whole.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

Draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1773, as a whole, was adopted by 20 votes to none, with 4 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their vote after the voting.

Mr. LEHNE (Norway): My delegation abstained during the vote on the draft resolution contained in document A/AC.109/L.1773, as a whole. We voted against the seventh preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 5. I would like to reaffirm Norway's longstanding support for any realistic step compatible with the Charter of the United Nations to implement the Declaration

(Mr. Lehne, Norway)

on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in all territories under colonial domination.

Against this background, Norway does not hesitate to condemn the activities of all those foreign economic and other interests which do impede the process of decolonization. However, the draft resolution that was just adopted does not recognize that foreign economic and other activities can indeed be beneficial to the economic and social development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. This failure to distinguish between various kinds of activity seems to us to detract from the fundamental aims of the draft resolution.

In addition, we have reservations of principle with regard to a number of specific paragraphs in the draft resolution that fail to take into account the Charter provisions concerning the division of competence between the General Assembly and the Security Council. Moreover, we oppose the arbitrary singling out of groups of countries and individual countries as allegedly maintaining extensive links with South Africa in diverse fields.

The world has lately witnessed important improvements in the international political climate. Some of the texts of this Committee do not seem to keep up with these developments and are thus becoming increasingly outdated. I am referring particularly to the positive developments in South Africa, including the declaration of the Government of South Africa of its intention to become a party to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty.

It is our hope that this trend in the Committee can be changed in order to enhance the credibility of its work.

Mr. BYKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): With respect to our votes today on two draft resolutions and a draft decision, and in the light of the fact that this session of the Special Committee will soon be coming to an end, our delegation would like to refer to the positive events that have taken place in the course of this session, including those related to the streamlining of our work methods.

It is with some sense of satisfaction that we note that, on the basis of a consensus, we had already adopted an omnibus resolution on 10 colonial Territories as well as several other decisions reflecting the Committee's unanimity.

(Mr. Bykov, USSR)

The progress which has thus been achieved is the result of this spirit of cooperation and the constructive and collective efforts of the members of the Committee. Nevertheless, as was clear from today's votes, there are still some points on which the Committee has not yet achieved consensus, which of course can only be regretted. All members of the Committee must make a concerted effort in order to arrive at practical consensus decisions while taking fully into account the real situation. This would contribute to a strengthening of the efficiency of the measures adopted in the interests of the colonial Territories and of the completion of the decolonization process.

The Soviet delegation will in future continue to cooperate actively with all delegations in order to achieve this important aim.

Mr. KOLAROV (Bulgaria): I shall be very brief and refrain from expressing the well-known position of the Republic of Bulgaria on the questions on which we have just taken decisions. Regrettably, the language in some of the paragraphs of the texts - including name-calling - as well as their content, made them unacceptable to my delegation. Hence, it was impossible for my delegation to join in a consensus. We therefore voted against those paragraphs and abstained in the votes on the text as a whole.

Nevertheless, we should like to commend the spirit of cooperation which prevailed in the Committee during its deliberations, including those of the open-ended Working Group, and express the hope that next year the Committee will be in a position to prepare more balanced consensus texts fully reflecting the new realities in the world.

Mr. NKOUNKOU (Congo) (interpretation from French): Our delegation voted in favour of the draft resolutions and draft decision just adopted, thereby illustrating the importance Congo attaches to the right of peoples to exercise their right to self-determination.

However, in view of the complementarity and interdependence of the world economy today, we view the condemnation as a whole of the role of multinational corporations as lacking a sense of realism. It must be emphasized that not all of them are predatory. Also, we regret the singling out of only one State as regards the situation in southern Africa.

Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia): We wish to take this opportunity to make a very brief statement, especially in view of the rather positive spirit which has prevailed in the Committee.

We are in agreement with the very well considered view expressed by Ambassador Bykov of the Soviet Union to the extent that this particular session of the Committee has been rewarding. It has been rewarding because we have been able for the first time to adopt an omnibus draft resolution covering a number of Non-Self-Governing Territories. We have also been able to adopt draft resolutions and decisions which succeeded in commanding the support of many, if not all, delegations. We are grateful to you for this, Sir. We very much appreciate the tremendous efforts you have deployed, in spite of your corollary duties in the Security Council. We are also grateful to your colleague from Havana, Ms. Maria Cecilia Bermudez, who guided the Working Group that considered the three most contoversial draft resolutions and decisions.

At the outset of the consultations we had the opportunity to indicate that on the question of apartheid the Committee stands to benefit from the

(Mr. Hagoss, Ethiopia)

considered views of, first and foremost, the people of South Africa, as represented by their legitimate representatives, namely, the liberation movements. We also had occasion to say that the front-line States may also provide us with indications. We were happy to see that in the consultations that were held these legitimate representatives had indeed their own input. Because of their participation, the texts maintained some very important elements which were in the hearts of the people of South Africa; but they were also couched in such a way as to ensure that the draft resolutions and decisions commanded the widest possible support.

This delegation attempted - and will continue to attempt - to make its contributions so that the Committee could be in a position to reflect the realities whatever such realities might be. We would have been very happy, for instance, if the latest developments concerning South Africa - especially its signature of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other important issues - had found a place in the text in one form or another. As I indicated in the early consultations, had that been the case this delegation would have voted in favour of the text. If we attempted to work for a consensus, it was because we wanted to galvanize as much support as possible for the cause of South Africa. We shall therefore continue to make such efforts, including at the forthcoming session of the Fourth Committee.

On this occasion, we would again like to thank you, Sir, and all those delegations that were involved in the consultations. I will say again that we could have achieved more had there not been occasions on which we lost some opportunities.

(Mr. Hagoss, Ethiopia)

Coming as I do from an agrarian society, I always learn a lesson from a proverb in my country that says:

"Those who overstretch their hands to hold onto an apple on a tree may take the unnecessary chance of losing a jarful of wine from their armpit."

Be that as it may, I think we can congratulate ourselves for having succeeded in adopting draft resolutions and decisions which really commanded quite significant support. As we have seen, the results are very encouraging, and I hope that we shall continue to learn from the constructive dialogue which has prevailed under your chairmanship, Sir, and also under the chairmanship of your very able colleague, Ms. Bermudez. To both of you, and to all delegations, we are grateful, and we intend to learn a few lessons so that the Committee may continue to ensure its relevance, efficacy and efficiency.

Mr. SLABY (Czechoslovakia): My delegation voted against some paragraphs on which a separate vote had been requested, owing to our reservations of principle. Moreover, we are not happy with other provisions as contained, in particular, in the following paragraphs: the thirteenth and seventeenth preambular paragraphs and operative paragraphs 17 and 18 of document A/AC.109/L.1771 on specialized agencies; paragraphs 5, 6 and 8 of document A/AC.109/L.1772, dealing with military activities; and the eighth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 6, 7 and 9 of document A/AC.109/PV.1773, dealing with economic interests.

My delegation has stated several times that Czechoslovakia stands for full observance of the Declaration on decolonization for completion of the decolonization process. We believe it is important to recall our position precisely in the context of the texts that have just been adopted. Specifically, what my delegation has in mind is that the United Nations should approach the eradication of the remnants of colonialism in a fundamentally new way emanating from the spirit of our times. The adoption of an omnibus draft resolution and the approved merger of the Subcommittees are just two very good steps in that direction.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee has thus concluded its consideration of the item.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to draw members' attention to aide-mémoire 22/91 on Western Sahara, which was distributed at the outset of this meeting, and which contains a proposal submitted by the Expanded Bureau of the Committee. Does any member wish to comment on this

(The Chairman)

matter? Since that does not appear to be the case, may I take it that the Committee approves the proposal contained therein?

It was so decided.

Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia): As I must fax the outcome of this meeting to headquarters, I should appreciate a legal clarification as to whether the proposal contained in the form of an aide-mémoire that the Committee has just approved constitutes a decision, a recommendation or a proposal by the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I would describe it as a decision taken by the Committee at its 1397th meeting with regard to the proposal submitted by the Expanded Bureau, and contained in aide-mémoire 22/91.

The Committee has thus concluded consideration of all substantive items on its agenda.

CLOSING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN 1991

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): May I, at the very outset, state how privileged I feel to have presided over the meetings of the Special Committee during a large part of this year.

This past year will indeed be remembered as a watershed in the work of the Special Committee. With Namibia's independence in the thirtieth year of the adoption of the Declaration contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), the work of the Committee entered a new phase.

Aware of the unique issues and specific problems affecting the remaining colonial Territories, the Committee has reviewed its method of work in the search for greater efficiency and rationalization, so as to strengthen its efforts on behalf of the peoples of the Territories.

(The Chairman)

All delegations contributed to this endeavour with a spirit of open-mindedness and a determination to listen to different points of view, while keeping in mind the paramount interests of the peoples of the Territories and their representatives. Special emphasis was placed this year on the specific needs of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and on the welfare of their inhabitants.

I should like to state my appreciation to Ambassador Lohia, Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea, for having presided over our Working Group on review of the work of the Committee, which came up with the pertinent recommendations that guided our work this year. In my opinion, the results of this Working Group, which were approved by the Committee, are an important contribution to the fulfilment of the Committee's lofty mission of ensuring the implementation of resolution 1514 (XV).

As a result of this review process, the Subcommittee on Small Territories adopted a consolidated draft resolution on 10 Non-Self-Governing Territories, containing preambular and operative paragraphs dealing with aspects common to those 10 Territories in addition to the 10 separate draft resolutions on specific conditions prevailing in each of the Territories. The Subcommittee also prepared separate draft decisions on Pitcairn and St. Helena, as well as a draft resolution on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. It therefore submitted for members' approval four reports, instead of the usual 13.

The Committee also adopted six draft resolutions on items allocated directly to the Special Committee, some of them dealing with areas of particular concern, such as the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies and the international organizations associated with the

(The Chairman)

United Nations, the activities of foreign economic interests in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and military activities and arrangements of colonial Powers in Territories under their administration.

(The Chairman)

Similarly, the Committee adopted the report of the Subcommittee on Petitions, Information and Assistance, also presented in a new and consolidated format, incorporating new ideas in its conclusions and recommendations regarding each item of its mandate.

Another major new development is that the Committee, upon the recommendation of the Working Group, decided to merge its two subcommittees and create the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance, effective 1 January 1992. That decision will undoubtedly rationalize our work by eliminating duplication while consolidating information and enabling the members of the new Subcommittee to reach conclusions and recommendations on the basis of more comprehensive and up-to-date information regarding the Territories.

Looking ahead, one particular area which bears critical importance for our work - namely the cooperation and participation of the administering Powers in the efforts and work of the Special Committee - will continue to require urgent and serious attention. We continue to attach the utmost importance to the dispatch of United Nations visiting missions to the Territories as a means of securing first-hand information on those Territories. As I pointed out earlier, our recommendations this year reflect the main concern of the Committee, namely the specific conditions and problems confronting the peoples of the Territories. In order to act on that concern, it is imperative that we obtain first-hand information.

Self-determination remains a priority on the world scene, and the United Nations continues to play the leading role in assisting the peoples concerned

(The Chairman)

to achieve that goal. The momentum attained during Namibia's independence process will, I hope, lead to yet another successful outcome in the implementation of the United Nations Plan in Western Sahara.

We have entered the decade which the United Nations is viewing as the timeframe for its ultimate efforts in favour of decolonization. These can be completed only through concrete actions based on proposals reflecting the wishes of the peoples of those Territories and responding to their inalienable rights. The task of our Committee is now more than ever to spearhead the efforts of the Organization to fulfil the goal set out in General Assembly resolution 43/47: to ensure complete decolonization by the year 2000. The Special Committee is braced for the challenges ahead, with a spirit of commitment and flexibility.

As we come to the end of this session I should like to express my sincere appreciation to all members of the Committee. Their cooperation and commitment were particularly valuable - indeed, critical - in securing the innovations and flexibility reflected in the exercise of review and reform the Committee undertook this year. It was indeed an honour and an edifying experience for me to preside over our deliberations.

I am indeed grateful to all members, and in particular to Mr. Sverre J. Bergh Johansen of Norway and Mr. Alexander Slaby of Czechoslovakia, for their contribution to the work of the Committee. In the same vein I should like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Mohammad Najdat Shaheed of the Syrian Arab Republic for a task well done. I also thank Mr. Ghazi Jomaa of Tunisia, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, and

(The Chairman)

Mr. José E. Acosta Fragachan of Venezuela, Rapporteur of that Subcommittee, for their invaluable efforts in reviewing the situation in the small Territories.

I am especially grateful to my colleague, Ambassador Lohia of Papua New Guinea, for his invaluable leadership, both as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Petitions, Information and Assistance and as Chairman of the Working Group.

I should like to state the appreciation of the Committee for the cooperation of the administering Powers which have participated in the work of the Committee and in the deliberations of the Working Group. We have taken due note of their concerns and views and intend to continue to give them our serious attention as a part of the continuing process of review we have undertaken, while expressing the hope that their participation in the work of the Committee will increase. We also look forward to favourable consideration of the various recommendations contained in our documents and addressed to the administering Powers, particularly relating to the importance of visiting missions in the exercise of our mandate and their concrete and direct contribution to the Committee's search for the best solution for the future status of each Territory remaining on our agenda.

I should like also to pay a tribute here to the specialized agencies that have provided information to our Committee and whose participation is of great importance to the Committee in the accomplishment of its task.

I express my gratitude also to the large number of petitioners from several Territories who appeared before the Committee and provided us with current information regarding prevailing conditions and their views as to the

(The Chairman)

aspirations of the peoples of those Territories. The Committee sincerely hopes to increase these contacts in the near future.

I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, for his continued efforts in support of the right of self-determination and independence of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories. I am grateful also to Mr. James Jonah, Under-Secretary-General of our substantive Department, for all the assistance he and his colleagues in the Secretariat have given the Committee throughout the year.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish also to thank our interpreters, translators, verbatim reporters, press and conference officers and many others for the efficient manner in which they assisted us in our work.

I think we can look forward to the forthcoming session of the General Assembly and the Fourth Committee with optimism. The review process we have conducted last year and this year has resulted in concrete efforts to improve the Special Committee's approach, methods and procedures. I am certain these will increase the Committee's effectiveness and place it in a better position to fulfil its mandate to work for the full implementation of General Assembly 1514 (XV), the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. I thank everyone once again for their cooperation.

I declare the 1991 session of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples concluded.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.